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1.

There were many aviation schools for mechanics in the USSR: in addition to the Vasilkov School

The Volsk Military Aviation School (Volskaya Voennaya Aviatsionnaya Shkola) located in Volsk (5203N-4724E) /exact location unknown/.

this was the largest aviation technical school in the USSR. It offered courses not only for aircraft mechanics but for radio, instrument, electrical, oxygen and armament mechanics and technicians. The length of the courses was approximately 18 months. The courses were basically for EM; however, extension courses were offered to honor graduates; upon completion, the men were given commissions as Junior Technical Lieutenants.

The First (Pervaya) and Second (Vtoraya) Moscow Aviation Schools For Mechanics (Moskovaya Aviatsionnaya Shkola Mekhanikov). Both these schools were located in Moscow /exact location unknown/.

the same courses offered at the Volsk School were given at both of the schools.

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The Shadrinsk Aviation School For Mechanics (Shadrinskaya Aviatsionnaya Shkola Mekhanikov).

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a relatively new school for mechanics had been opened in Shadrinsk (5605N-6339E) in 1948 or 1949.

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when they arrived at the school as part of the first class in January 1949, some of the buildings, especially the barracks, had not been completed; the men were required to live in barracks without windows. the organization and the subjects taught at the school were similar to that of the Vasilkov School. have no further information.

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The Kotovsk School For Junior Specialists (Kotovskaya Shkola Mladshikh Avio-Spetsialistov). this school was located in Kotovsk (4745N-2933E) and offered primary courses in airplane mechanics to those not having seven grades of formal education.

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all men desiring to become airplane mechanics must complete seven grades of formal school or a school of this type before becoming eligible to attend a school of the Vasilkov type.

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Kvatu (Kievskoe Voennoe Aviatsionnoe Tekhnicheskoe Uchilishche - The Kiev Military Aviation Technical Institute). The school was located in Kiev (5027N-3032E) exact location unknown.

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Prior to 1948, this was a mechanics school for EM only; the school was to be converted into an officers' school; the first class was to begin in January 1949.

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Khvatu (Kharkovskoe Voennoe Aviatsionnoe Tekhnicheskoe Uchilishche (The Kharkov Military Aviation Technical Institute).

2.

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The 748th Guards Bomber Regiment used, at the most, two days of the week as flying days; the remaining four days were spent in ground school. None of the gunners, bombardiers or navigators were assigned duties other than their primaries. The ground training lasted eight hours a day from Monday to Friday, and six hours on Saturday. The flying day consisted of usually not more than two hours in the air, depending on the type of exercise to be flown for that day; the remainder of the flying day was free time for all crews who had completed their flights. The training of the gunner was broken down into various groups. Most of the training was ground-to-ground firing practice on a 50 meter range, using SHKAS-7.62mm machine guns, firing on a sleeve target towed by a PO-2 type aircraft. Air-to-air practice was part of almost every practice mission, when a small amount of firing was done with SHKAS-7.62mm or UB-12.7mm machine guns at a sleeve target towed by a PE-2 aircraft.

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Ground classes were given in assembly and disassembly of weapons, care and cleaning of weapons, sighting and aerial gunnery.

3.

The majority of the "home made" synthetic trainers were developed and constructed locally. When and if a member of the regiment had an idea for a trainer which would improve those then in use, he consulted his superiors, drew up the plans, gained the approval of the regimental commanding officer and, with the help of several mechanics of his squadron, proceeded to construct them.

4.

Only those who had completed seven grades of formal schooling were eligible to attend an aviation mechanics' school. Those who had not completed seven grades were required to attend an eight months course at a SHMAS (Shkola Mladshikh Avio-Spetsialistov - School for Junior Aviation Specialists). Upon entry into the service, a soldier's records were screened to determine his adaptability to mechanical training. If the soldier indicated his desire to attend a mechanics school and providing he met the above educational qualification, he was given:

- (a) An educational examination on Russian, The Soviet Constitution, algebra, geometry, physics and geography. These tests were graded five thru one, five being the highest and one the lowest. An average grade of three was required to pass the examination.
- (b) A physical fitness test in which the applicant was required to accomplish six pull-ups, a three-meter broad-jump, a 110 centimeter high-jump and a run of one kilometer.
- (c) A complete physical examination.

any soldier who desired mechanics training and could pass the above tests and qualifications, was allowed to attend the school. no case where a man was sent to mechanics school when he did not want to go.

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5.

If a man wanted to remain in the AF for a period longer than his term required, he could submit a request for extension to his squadron commander, who in turn forwarded it to higher headquarters for approval. There were very few

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approvals. [ ] the military seemed to take the attitude that it was cheaper to draft recruits, train them and pay them 70 rubles a month than to pay a high ranking NCO considerably more money to do the same job. With regard to commissions [ ] it was relatively easy to secure a commissioned grade. For instance, if a would-be mechanic had 10 grades of formal education and could pass the examinations as described above, he was sent to an aviation institute rather than to an aviation mechanics school. Upon the completion of an approximately 14 months course at this institute, he was commissioned as a Technical Lieutenant. Also, honor graduates of mechanics schools were offered additional six months courses at the same school upon the successful completion of which they were offered commissions as Junior Technical Lieutenants. [ ] in April 1951, a notice was placed on the bulletin boards of the 748th Guards Bomber Regiment wherein it was stated that any NCO mechanic wishing to be commissioned need only to make application and the commission as Junior Technical Lieutenant would be granted. Since officers were required to serve a lifetime in the service, only a very few NCOs ever applied for a commission regardless of the seemingly easy path towards commissioned status. Following demobilization, an aviation mechanic, as do all military men, reported to his District Military Committee. He was then released by his Committee to find a job on his own. Jobs with civilian airlines were very scarce, making it very difficult, if not impossible, to secure a job in line with the training the man received in the military. However, once a year the inactive mechanic was required to report to a local military airfield where he received a one month refresher course. [ ]

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6.

7.

Practice air alerts, in which the entire regiment participated, were given usually once a month to the 748th Guards Bomber Regiment. A typical alert [ ]

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[ ] was as follows.

The alert was sounded by an undulating blast on a siren or by repeated ringing of a gong. Following the signal, the crew had approximately forty five minutes to prepare their aircraft for flight (start and warm up the engines, load the bomb racks and guns). This preparation was done while the aircraft were parked on their respective ramps in the regimental area. The control of take-off was handled from a point at the end of the runway and done in the following manner: a series of three green flares were fired from the control point. First flare: all pilots started the engines of their planes. Second flare: the planes moved out, by squadrons, to the end of the runway

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and grouped in pairs, the first pair positioning themselves in take-off position. Third flare: when this flare was fired, the first pair of the 1st Flight of the 1st Squadron proceeded to take-off, echelon right. As the first pair neared the end of the runway, the second pair started their take-off run. The remaining planes followed in the same manner. The usual number of aircraft for the regiment to put aloft during a practice alert was 27. Barring any unforeseen mishap, the entire regiment of 27 planes could be airborne in three minutes. When the aircraft were airborne, they proceeded to a predetermined rendezvous where they grouped in formation (always in threes, V formation). On return to the field, the aircraft passed over the runways flying in line (Peleng), echelon right or left, depending on the traffic pattern for the day, and landed one behind the other.

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